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JACKSON HOLE ELK FACE SERIOUS FOOD SHORTAGE

At the Jackson Hole elk refuge in Wyoming Uncle Sam has a winter relief problem that is causing grave concern in the Bureau of Biological Survey.

Thousands of elk--magnificent wapiti that spend their summers in and about the southern part of Yellowstone National Park--are crowding into the refuge feeding grounds, driven there by heavy snow and lack of food in the surrounding hills. The supply of hay raised on the refuge is rapidly diminishing, reports the Bureau. So severe are the range conditions this year that the elk are joining the Government's "bread line" in larger numbers than ever, and this rush comes at a time when the hay supply is unusually low because of drought last summer.

Unless additional hay can be purchased for use at the refuge, the animals may face starvation conditions for the four to six weeks that would intervene between the end of the feeding and the coming of spring. Such conditions would cause hundreds of the animals to perish and would leave the entire herd in a critical condition.

Conservationists throughout the country are deeply concerned for the welfare of this herd, says the Bureau, and the Chief of the Biological Survey is seeking to ascertain whether there is any way to provide the additional feed needed. No Bureau appropriations are now available for the purchase, and the cooperating 1502-35

State and other agencies have exhausted their funds.

## Number in Bread Line Increasing

Most of the 20,000 or more elk that make up the Jackson Hole herd find their winter food normally outside the refuge, the Bureau explains, but many are forced to join the "bread line" nearl, every year, and during severe winters like the present one the number dependent on hand-outs mounts into the thousands. The largest number heretofore counted on the refuge feeding grounds was 11,239, in March two years ago. This year the agent at the refuge estimated that there were 8,000 animals being fed on January 17, and ten days later the number had increased to 9,000, indicating that before the winter is over the number will be the largest ever.

Last year a mild winter made feeding unnecessary, and it was thus possible to carry over for this year 2,140 tons of hay. Had the harvest on the refuge been normal last summer, this would have made ample provision for the present emergency. The disastrous drought conditions, however, resulted in a hay crop of only 660 tons, and this with 275 tons furnished by the State of Wyoming brought the total to only 3,075 tons on January 1, when it was necessary to start feeding, about two weeks earlier than usual. The inadequacy of this supply is indicated by the record of the less severe winter two years ago, when more than 3,200 tons of hay were fed. It is emphasized by the fact that now about 33 tons are being fed daily. The State has recently furnished 150 tons more, but this purchase, though exhausting the State's funds for the purpose, comes far short of meeting the need.

## Jackson Hole Herd a Last Remnant

The ell that are supported by the winter feeding at the Jackson Hole refuge constitute one of the few remaining herds of this species that once roamed practically the entire United States. Valued by the Nation as a game resource and an esthetic asset, and locally as a source of food, the elk have long been conserved through the cooperation of Federal, State, and local agencies.

"These elk," says the Biological Survey, "are among the most magnificent members of the deer family that we have left in this country, and the Bureau is going to do all within its power to see that the thrilling A-a-a-a-e-eeeeeeeeeeeeugh! e-uh! e-uh! e-uh! of thousands of bugling elk will again be heard in the mountains about Jackson Hole."